

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
HA-05 /073 W
-----047194 072202Z /63

P R 072122Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6259
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, NU
SUBJECT: CHAMORRO ASSASSINATION INVESTIGATION COMMISSION NAMED

1. ON APRIL 6 MINGOV ANTONIO MORA NAMED A COMMISSION OF DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS TO REVIEW THE INVESTIGATION OF THE ASSASSINATION OF DR. PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO. THERE HAD BEEN NO PREVIOUS CONTACT BY THE GON WITH THE PERSONS NAMED TO SERVE ON THE COMMISSION WHICH OPENED THE POSSIBILITY THEY WOULD REFUSE TO SERVE. SEVERAL OF THE PERSONS ARE REPORTED TO HAVE ALREADY REFUSED TO SERVE.

2. THE PERSONS NAMED BY MORA TO THE COMMISSION WICH HE WOULD HEAD ARE: A) ARCHBISHOP MIGUEL OBANDO Y BRAVO (LEADER OF THE NICARAGUAN CATHOLIC CHURCH); B) ING. ALFONSO ROBEL CALLEJAS (BUSINESSMAN, UNTIL RECENTLY PRESIDENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR NICARAGUAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (INDE) AND CURRENTLY INITIATOR OF A NEW OPPOSITION POLITICAL MOVEMENT); C) DR. FELIX ESTEBAN GUANDIQUE (PROMINENT LAWYER CRITICAL OF GON); D) DR. RODOLFO ABAUNZA SALINAS (LAWYER AND DIRECTOR OF LEON DAILY NEWSPAPER EL CENTROAMERICANO); AND E) DR.
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IDLEFONSO PALMA MARTINEZ, A LAWYER.

3. THE ARCHBISHOP, ING. ROBELO AND PALMA ARE REPORTED TO HAVE ALREADY SAID THEY WOULD NOT SERVE. DR. ABAUNZA, WITH WHOM AMBASSADOR AND POLOFF MET IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS NAMING, IS UNDECIDED ON WHETHER HE WILL SERVE. HE SAYD HE DOES NOT FEEL HE CAN SPARE TIME FROM HIS NEWSPAPER ACTIVITIES.

4. A LIBERAL PARTY LEADER INFORMED POLOFF THAT GON HAD DECIDED NOT TO CONSULT IN ADVANCE WITH THE PERSONS TO BE NAMED TO THE COMMISSION IN ORDER TO MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO REFUSE.

5. COMMENT: THE HANDLING OF THE CHAMORRO ASSASSINATION INVESTIGATION AND THE LACK OF ANY ACTIVITY TOWARD CLARIFYING THE "INTELLECTUAL AUTHOR(S)" OF THE CRIME SINCE THE EARLY ARRESTS OF THE KILLERS, HAS BEEN THE COMMON DENOMINATOR OF SUBSEQUENT PROTEST AGAINST THE REGIME. THE GON RECOGNIZES THE NEED TO TRY TO DIFFUSE THIS ISSUE, AND IT SELECTED A GROUP WHICH, IF THEY SERVED, COULD DISPEL POPULAR ANTIPATHY EVEN IF THE INVESTIGATION REMAINED UNCONCLUSIVE. ALL THESE PEOPLE ARE LIKELY TO BE RELUCTANT TO ACCEPT THIS RESPONSIBILITY PRECISELY BECAUSE THEY DO NOT WANT TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH AN INCONCLUSIVE INVESTIGATION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ASSASSINATION, INVESTIGATIONS, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MANAGU01638
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780151-0435
Format: TEL
From: MANAGUA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780481/aaaacqyp.tel
Line Count: 78
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: ab9cd4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3042827
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHAMORRO ASSASSINATION INVESTIGATION COMMISSION NAMED
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, NU, (CHAMORRO, PEDRO JOAQUIN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ab9cd4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014